

Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204553

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR NATO UR

SUBJECT: POLADS PAPER ON SOVIET INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) USNATO 4778, (B) USNATO 4741, (C) STATE 184899,
(D) STATE 170972

1. DEPARTMENT FINDS THE ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSIONS
SECTIONS OF THE PAPER FREQUENTLY IN LINE WITH OUR VIEW
OF SOVIET INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS. FOLLOWING SPECIFIC
COMMENTS ARE KEYED TO NUMBERED PARAGRAPHS OF POLADS PAPER.

2. WE SEE SOME CONFUSION IN PARAGRAPHS ONE AND TWO BETWEEN
(A) MEASURES TO ELIMINATE ALL EVIDENCES OF OPPOSITION AND
(B) MEASURES WHICH INDICATE A HARDENING OF INTERNAL POLICY
REGARDING DISSIDENTS. FOR EXAMPLE, REVOCATION OF
MEDVEDEV'S SOVIET CITIZENSHIP AND EXILE OF SINYAVSKI SERVED
TO ELIMINATE INDIVIDUAL NONCONFORMISTS BUT WERE NOT UNDULY
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HARSH BY SOVIET STANDARDS AND PROBABLY HAD LITTLE DETERRENT

EFFECT UPON OTHER DISSIDENTS. IN SHORT, SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE USED TWO SEPARATE TACTICS TO COPE WITH INTELLECTUAL NONCONFORMISTS: THREATS, HARASSMENT AND FORMAL PUNISHMENT WITHIN THE USSR; AND BANISHMENT FROM THE USSR. BOTH HAVE TO DO WITH CONTROLLING DISSIDENCE, BUT THE LATTER DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT HARDENING OF INTERNAL POLICY.

3. WE FEEL THAT CASES OF SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV SHOULD BE CLASSED SEPARATELY FROM OTHER CASES OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH TWO. WE THINK UNIQUE INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE OF BOTH MEN AND INTERNATIONAL REACTION EVOKED BY CRITICISM OF THEM FORCED SOVIETS TO LIMIT THEMSELVES ONLY TO THREATS, AT LEAST IN SHORT TERM. US PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION CLEARLY WAS MORE ASTONISHED AT SEVERITY OF THREATS AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV THAN AT TOLERANCE SHOWN TOWARD THEM BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES.

4. WE DOUBT THAT DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST ISRAELI ATHLETES AT UNIVERSITY GAMES AND HARASSMENT OF SOVIET JE-ISH SPECTATORS ARE RELEVANT TO PARAGRAPH TWO. IN ANY CASE, WE INTERPRET EPISODE MORE AS CRUDE ATTEMPT BY AUTHORITIES TO SHOW THAT ISRAEL IS NOT POPULAR IN USSR THAN AS MANIFESTATION OF OFFICIAL OR POPULAR ANTI-SEMITISM.

5. MISSION WILL NOTE FROM REFTEL D THAT OUR INTERPRETATION OF BREZHNEV'S ALMA ATA REMARKS ON EXPANSION OF CONTACTS DISCUSSED IN PARAGRAPH FIVE OF POLADS PAPER IS THAT BREZHNEV'S FORMULATION MAY NOT SIGNAL SHARP DIFFERENCES WITHIN SOVIET LEADERSHIP SO MUCH AS NEW TACK WHICH HAS TWO RELATED ASPECTS (I.E., USSR HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ABROAD BUT AT SAME TIME INSISTS UPON IDEOLOGICAL CONFORMITY AT HOME.)

6. PARAGRAPH SEVEN IS UNCLEAR: PRESUMABLY IT REFERS TO /CURRENT TRUCE/ AMONG SOVIET LEADERS. IT SHOULD EITHER BE EXPANDED OR DELETED. WE SUGGEST IT BE DELETED PARTICULARLY GIVEN NEW UNCERTAINTIES CREATED BY MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

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7. REGARDING ASSESSMENT IN PARAGRAPH EIGHT, IN OUR VIEW THE CURRENT SOVIET POLICY OF DETENTE ABROAD AND REPRESSION AT HOME ARE CONSISTENT WITH SOVIET LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES. WE BELIEVE THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THESE POLICIES IS MORE IN THE EYE OF THE WESTERN OBSERVER THAN THAT OF THE SOVIET POLICY-MAKER.

8. WE QUESTION THE IMPLICATION IN PARAGRAPH NINE THAT

WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP BREZHNEV IS RELATIVELY HESITANT TO APPROVE REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST DISSIDENTS. WE FIND LITTLE IN HIS RECORD TO INDICATE THAT HE FAVORS A MORE RELAXED INTERNAL SYSTEM.

9. MISSION MAY WISH TO REFER TO REFTEL C REGARDING OUR

VIEW OF SOVIET MOTIVATIONS IN CEASING JAMMING OF VOA,BBC AND DEUTSCHE WELLE, DSSCUSSED IN PARAGRAPH TEN OF POLADS PAPER. WE DOUBT THAT THIS ACTION WAS INTENDED TO OFFSET ADVERSE EXTERNAL EFFECTS OF ANTI-DISSIDENCE CAMPAIGN.

10. WE SUGGEST PARAGRAPH TWELVE BE RE-CAST TO INDICATE THAT THE KRASIN-YAKIR TRIAL AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS ABOVE ALL REPRESENTED AN ATTEMPT BY THE REGIME TO CRUSH SAMIZDAT AND OTHER ASPECTS OF ORGANIZED DISSIDENCE AS WELL AS TO ISOLATE SAKHAROV AND SOLZHENITSYN. SO FAR, THIS ATTEMPT HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

11. DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN SCENARIO OUTLINED BY MISSION IN FINAL PARAGRAPHS OF REFTEL B. KISSINGER

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